

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

results.

Replace the paragraph on page 20, starting at line 8 with the following text:

In accordance with the aligning and supplying apparatus described in the sixth aspect, it is possible to align all the small articles having different widths and thicknesses and stabilizing under the turned state in a low attitude, and it is not necessary to sort, so that it is possible to improve the processing efficiency.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 2-5 without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein

Please replace the text of claim 1 with the following text:

1. A conveying apparatus comprising:
 - a rotary disc portion having a pair of parallel plate members with a region defined there between;
 - a gap formed on the region between the pair of parallel plate members;
 - a first suctioning device disposed to secure an article on the outer peripheral surfaces of the pair of parallel plate members by extracting air from the gap; and
 - a linear conveying portion having a pair of parallel conveying belts with a gap formed there between, the linear conveying portion being in communication with the rotary disc portion to transfer the article from the rotary disc portion to the linear conveying portion.

Please add new claims 7-24 as follows:

7. The conveying apparatus according to claim 1 comprising supporting members positioned in the pair of parallel plate members to hold the article in place such that the article transfers to the linear conveying portion.
8. The conveying apparatus according to claim 7, wherein the supporting members

have a large coefficient of friction.

TEST AVAILABLE COPY

9. The conveying apparatus according to claim 7, wherein the pair of parallel plate members includes grooves provided around the peripheral surface of each of the parallel plate members.

10. The conveying apparatus according to claim 7, wherein the supporting members are made of rubber.

11. The conveying apparatus according to claim 1 further comprising a second suctioning device provided between the pair of parallel conveying belts.

12. The conveying apparatus according to claim 1 further comprising a side surface inspection portion for inspecting a side surface of the article.

13. The conveying apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the linear conveying portion includes a first conveying portion and a second conveying portion, one end of the first conveying portion is in communication with the outer peripheral surfaces of the pair of parallel plate members so as to transfer the article, and one end of the second conveying portion is in communication with the other end of the first conveying portion so as to further transfer the article.

14. The conveying apparatus according to claim 13 further comprising an aligning and supplying apparatus which aligns the article and supplies the article to the outer peripheral surfaces of the pair of parallel plate members,

the aligning and supplying apparatus being positioned opposite the first conveying portion,

wherein the rotary disc portion is disposed between the aligning and supplying apparatus and the first conveying portion.

15. The conveying apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the aligning and

supplying apparatus includes a turntable and a width guide.

16. The conveying apparatus according to claim 1 further comprising an air shutting device positioned between the pair of parallel plate members and forming the slit, the air shutting device having a solid portion for preventing air suctioning.

17. The conveying apparatus according to claim 13 further comprising;
a front surface inspection portion for inspecting a front surface of the article conveyed on the first conveying portion;
a back surface inspection portion for inspecting a back surface of the article conveyed on the second conveying portion; and
a sorting portion for sorting the article.

18. The conveying apparatus according to claim 17, wherein the article is sorted in response to results obtained from the front surface inspection portion, the back surface inspection portion or the side surface inspection portion.

19. A method for conveying an article comprising:
providing an article on a rotary disc portion having a pair of parallel plate members with a region defined there between, with a gap formed on one side of the region between the pair of parallel plate members;
securing the article on outer peripheral surfaces of the pair of parallel plate members by extracting air from the gap; and
guiding the article onto a linear conveying portion having a pair of parallel conveying belts with a gap formed there between, the linear conveying portion being in communication with the rotary disc portion to transfer the article from the rotary disc portion to the linear conveying portion.

20. The method for conveying according to claim 19 further comprising providing grooves provided around the peripheral surface of each of the parallel plate members.